

The Five Domains of School Readiness

A child's readiness for school should be measured and addressed across five distinct but connected domains:

- **Physical Well-Being and Motor Development.**
Children's physical development (for example, rate of growth), health status (For example, ability to see and hear), and physical abilities (For example, ability to move around the environment, assisted or unassisted). Proper nutrition and rest, in order to have the energy and mobility to explore their environment and increase their ability to concentrate. In addition, early identification and intervention are critical for children with disabilities.
- **Social and Emotional Development.**
Includes children's feelings about themselves and others, ability to form relationships, interest in and skills needed to maintain positive relationships with adults and children, ability to understand the perspective and feelings of others, and skills needed to get along well in a group setting (for example, conflict resolution skills). Particularly important in this domain are the skills children demonstrate while making friends, appreciating differences, solving conflicts, and functioning effectively in groups. These characteristics form the foundation for learning and the relationships that give meaning to life. Positive relationships are essential to a child's emotional development and later academic success.
- **Approaches to Learning.**
Includes curiosity, enjoyment of learning, confidence, and creativity, attention to task, reflection, and interests and attitudes. These are manifested in all domains and curriculum areas, including music, dramatic play, and art.
- **Language Development.**
Includes verbal and nonverbal skills to convey and understand others' meaning (for example, speaks clearly or uses a nonverbal system of communication) as well as early literacy skills (for example, awareness of print, understanding that writing has meaning). Using language as a tool to communicate their needs, interact socially with others, and describe events, thoughts, and feelings. These skills and competencies apply to all languages; we should expect children who do not speak English in the home to demonstrate these skills in their primary language before they do so in English.
- **Cognition and General Knowledge.**
Includes basic knowledge about the world (for example, knows own name, knows basic science concepts) and other cognitive competencies like early mathematical skills (for example, knowledge of numbers, shapes, and simple patterns), and basic problem-solving skills (for example, understanding of similarities and differences). Have a natural curiosity and ability to acquire, organize, and use information in increasingly complex ways. Learn their own names, form ideas about family roles and community helpers, and learn the

names of some colors. They begin to understand that their actions have an effect on their environment and are able to think about things that are not present. They begin to understand simple scientific concepts by noticing, wondering, and exploring. They begin to ask questions as they engage in increasingly more focused explorations. They begin to demonstrate good problem-solving skills and also begin to express themselves creatively using a variety of media.

While separate and distinct, these domains interact with and reinforce each other. The need for children to develop across all five domains is supported by kindergarten teachers. They agree that physical well-being, social development, and curiosity are very important for kindergarten readiness.

Children's development varies widely at age five. Thus, we should not expect all children to reach a common "standard" of readiness. Children from various cultures and with various experiences will express their competencies differently and should be expected to show different patterns of development. The same is true for children with disabilities.

The concept of readiness includes much more than children's readiness. As defined by the National Education Goals Panel, the School Readiness Indicators Initiative, and others, readiness includes ready children, ready families, ready communities, ready early care and education, and ready schools. All are necessary so that all children will experience success.

It is the responsibility of schools to meet the needs of children as they enter school and to provide whatever services are needed to help each child reach his or her fullest potential.

Indiana has developed the Foundations to the Indiana Academic Standards for Young Children from Birth to Age 5. The Foundations are based on the latest national research and findings for all content areas and domains. By outlining specific skills and concepts and giving examples of instructional strategies, these foundations will support teachers, parents, and caregivers as they develop appropriate experiences for young children to help ensure success in kindergarten.

A copy of the Foundations can be viewed at:

http://www.doe.in.gov/primetime/docs/foundations/indiana_foundations.pdf